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UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics

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DURHAM, N.H. –How much sleep college students get each night is not affected by how much time they spend using Facebook and other social media, according to new research from the University of New Hampshire.

"The study indicates that using social media is hardly what keeps students up at night," said UNH adjunct professor Chuck Martin, whose marketing research class conducted the study. "Using Facebook, and to a lesser degree YouTube, blogs or Twitter, do not appear to have any impact on how much or how little students sleep."

Students at the UNH Whittemore School of Business surveyed 1,247 UNH students from a range of majors. The research shows that there is no correlation between the amount of sleep college students get and the time they spend using social media.

Researchers defined light users of social media as those who use social media for 31 or fewer minutes. Heavy usage was defined as usage exceeding 60 minutes. Light sleepers were defined as those who sleep seven hours or fewer. Students who were heavy sleepers were defined as those sleeping nine or more hours. Social networks were defined as Facebook, YouTube, blogs, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn.

Of heavy users of social media, 60 percent get a light amount of sleep per night. Of light users of social media, 60 percent also get a light amount of sleep per night. Those who use social networks for 61 or more minutes a day are equally as likely as those who use social networks for 31 or fewer minutes per day to sleep seven or fewer hours per night. Slightly more than one out of 10 (12 percent) of both heavy and light users of social media sleep nine or more hours per night.

Regarding overall sleep habits, the research showed health science students get the most sleep, with 14 percent saying they sleep nine or more hours a night. Engineering students get the least amount of sleep, with 69 percent saying they sleep seven or fewer hours per night. Freshmen get the most sleep, with 32 percent reporting they are heavy sleepers. On the other hand, only 18 percent of seniors said they are heavy sleepers.

The study found that the most popular online network was Facebook, with 97 percent of all university students actively using the social media platform. LinkedIn was the least used, with 10 percent of students actively using it.

Previous research conducted by Martin's marketing students showed that social media use does not impact academic performance. For more information, visit http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2009/dec/lw23social.cfm.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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